



Equity,
Disproportionality
& Design



2023

ANNUAL REPORT



Disproportionality

We empower regions to build systems where decisions about educational placements are equity-focused.

2,426,890 CHILDREN IN SYSTEMS WHERE WE WORK



Systems

We support the enabling educational system so all children receive instruction and support at a level they need.

37 SCHOOL SYSTEMS PARTICIPATING IN MTSS SERVICES



Capacity Development

We support organizations and individuals to create equitable environments for children to learn.

42 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED



Data Use

We tap into the power of data to foster transparency and build inclusivity.

25 DISTRICTS WITH INCREASED ACCESS TO DISPROPORTIONALITY DATA



OVERVIEW

THE DATA IN THIS REPORT REPRESENTS NEW WORK OCCURRING AFTER THE LAST ANNUAL REPORT. READERS SHOULD REVIEW [PREVIOUS ANNUAL REPORTS](#) FOR A FULL SCOPE OF ED&D'S PROGRESS.

In 2022-2023, the school districts and SELPA regions we served continued to face challenges such as staffing shortages, staff turnover, and delays in student learning resulting from Covid-19 school closures. From small school districts like Ripon Unified School District to large urban school districts in Los Angeles and San Diego, SELPA regions across the state have worked under extremely difficult conditions to pursue their goals to reduce disproportionality. To continue our broad reach across California, we provided professional development and support to SELPAs and LEAs in person as well as using a virtual format.

Using a tiered services model, we serviced 42 systems around communicating and using data effectively and addressing system-level changes to reduce disproportionality. Universal support included capacity building through blog posts, Podcasts, professional development workshops and presentations at local and state conferences.

Targeted support included professional development geared toward specific LEA-identified needs, use of the Equity Dispro Data System (EDDS) and iTAPP to incorporate practical routines to integrate

equity and data into regular existing meetings. Intensive support included individualized coaching sessions with LEA teams regarding implementation of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) in the areas of academics, social-emotional learning, and behavior, as well as intensive data analysis with LEAs examining disproportionality data trends.

During fall 2022 we continued our collaboration with the California Department of Education (CDE) by providing Compliance and Improvement Monitoring (CIM) Disproportionality Technical Assistance for Targeted Level 2 and Level 3. Our use of the human-centered approach enabled us to create a growth focused experience for LEAs completing Step 2 and Step 3 of the CIM process while striving to reduce disproportionality and create lasting change in their LEAs.

As in previous years, we proudly share the impact of our work for the 2022-2023 grant year. Our annual report includes results from statewide indicators in the areas of disproportionality, efforts to build capacity at the SELPA regional level, systems improvement through MTSS, and the impact of our EDDS and iTAPP data projects. We also share these results by service location.

Although the ED&D Project concludes June 2023, our team continues to develop project ideas that would scale our practical and user-friendly brand of equity work to even more educational systems beyond 2023. As we conclude the grant timeline, our team is securing funded partnerships with LEAs who value our knowledge base and skills in preventing disproportionality in schools.

TIMELINE

2018

We responded to California’s goal to have zero percent of districts have a disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education that results from inappropriate identification. We proposed assisting districts to engage in a self-assessment process using data analysis to reduce disproportionality. Through statewide coaching we proposed building a network of practitioners and communities of practice to assist the state in achieving these goals.

2019

We embarked on an epic journey with support from our Teachers Guild partners to launch a design thinking team with the goal of transforming our community’s passion for equity into services that influence outcomes for our students.

2020

We began providing direct support to school districts around the state launching our training series on awareness, action, and scale. The first half of the year focused on building the ED&D community design teams and introducing them to our SELPAs. The second half involved applying the work of our design teams to our preventive tools and services. We developed our relationships with SELPAs in order to work together to improve awareness about disproportionality, empowering our partners with tools for action, and activating our community networks to scale these efforts.

2021

We introduced a different delivery model, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, shifting to virtual workshops and coaching support to continue our approach to use and communicate data effectively and address system-level changes. We provided nearly four dozen systems with crucial support, including workshops for improving instructional and intervention systems, data use, capacity building for SELPA leaders, and our newest offering—podcasting best practices that support the creation of bias-free environments for students with disabilities.

2022

We continued to reduce disproportionality by supporting SELPAs across California through professional development in effective data use and implementation of multi-tiered support systems. Additionally, we redesigned and provided technical assistance (TA) for local education agencies (LEAs) in Targeted Level 2 & 3 Disproportionality. The California Department of Education (CDE) identified 74 LEAs as Targeted Level 2 who were required to collaborate with ED&D throughout TA the process. Targeted Level 3 LEAs were provided with the option to collaborate. We incorporated a human centered focus and design thinking approach in the development of the new CIM process. The redesigned process included the opportunity for LEAs to engage in individualized team coaching sessions where the ED&D and FMTA representatives could address questions, concerns and provide guidance for LEA teams while completing the TA journey in an organized manner.

2023

We closed out our grant work focused on empowering regions to build systems where decisions about educational experience are equity focused. We continue to strive to build capacity by enabling educational systems to provide all children with appropriate instruction and support. We supported organizations and individuals to create equitable environments for students to learn through targeted professional learning in areas such as MTSS, PBIS, and data literacy. We encourage LEAs to tap into the power of data to foster transparency and build inclusivity. Though our grant has come to an end, our work is just beginning, and we are committed to continue our effort to reduce and prevent disproportionality in our schools.

DISPROPORTIONALITY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR COMMUNITIES, SELPAS, LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES, AND NON-PROFIT SUPPORT PROVIDERS, ED&D WORKS WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERS TO EXAMINE HOW A STUDENT’S BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AFFECT THEIR CHANCE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY AND THE POSSIBLE SYSTEM-LEVEL REASONS THESE OUTCOMES EXIST. ED&D’S WORK UNCOVERS THE ROOT CAUSES OF DISPROPORTIONALITY WITH THE PURPOSE OF BUILDING AN EQUITABLE SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR ALL STUDENTS.

2,766,608
OUTCOMES

In California, more than 2.6 million students attend schools in systems where disproportionality affects educational outcomes. ED&D partners with 90 school districts across the state serving nearly 2.5 million students to reduce the causes of disproportionality in special education eligibility.

ED&D’s dual focus on human-centered design and using systemic practices (including MTSS and data use) present the greatest opportunity for system and student-level change regarding inequitable school outcomes.

ED&D’s innovative approach has substantially increased awareness of disproportionality in each of these 90 systems and has empowered these systems to act on disproportionality causes in a time when the added stressors introduced by the pandemic have the potential of compounding the problem.



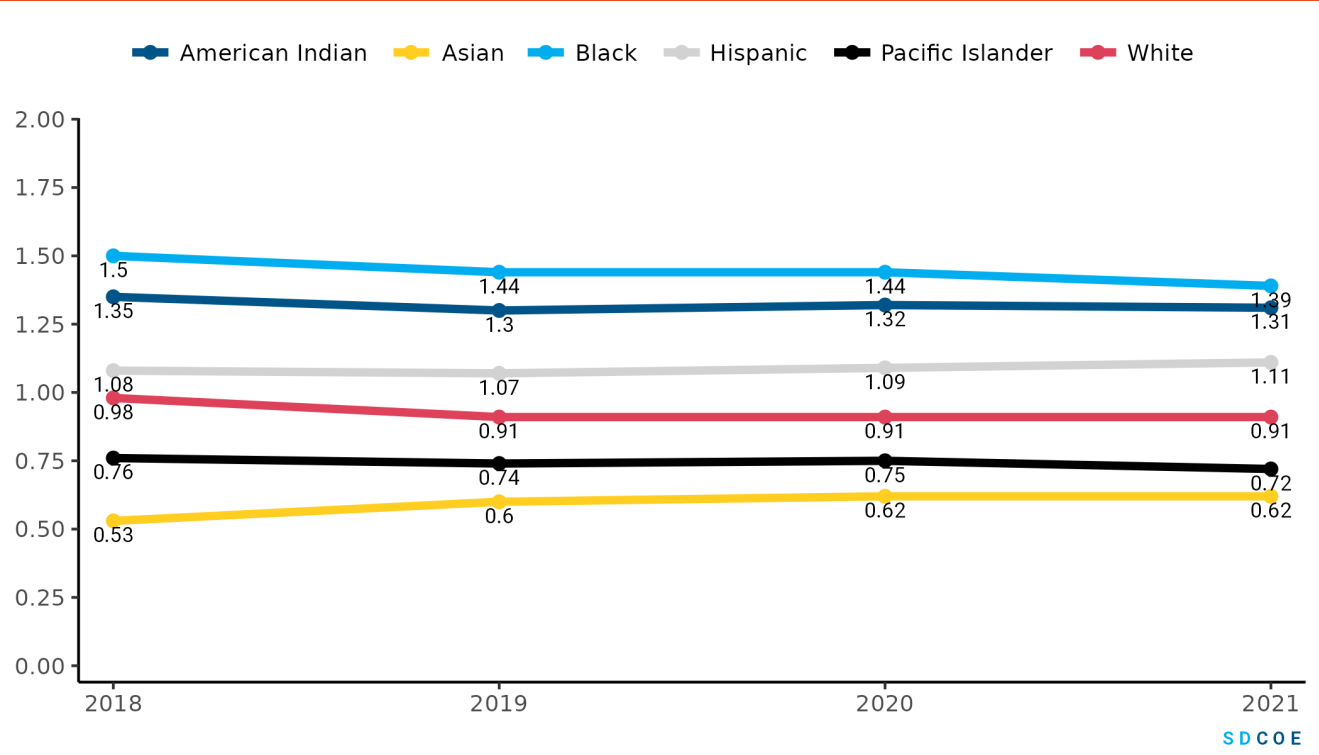
DISPROPORTIONALITY IMPACT

ED&D worked closely with school districts and special education leaders from 2018-2023 to learn how a student’s background characteristics affected his or her chances of special education eligibility. The team also investigated the system level reasons why disproportionality exists and the potential responses to these reasons. From their analyses, ED&D built the capacity of district leaders to make system-level changes and capture the data to understand whether these changes were making a difference. Coupled with customized coaching support to strengthen cycles of action and data use, the final ED&D service resulted in a highly co-designed support process with clear steps for progress.

During this five-year grant, ED&D witnessed a decline statewide in disproportionality for African American students from a risk ratio of 1.5 to 1.39, which translates into over 3,600 fewer African American students determined eligible for special education. A risk ratio of 1.0 indicates that the student group has the same risk of eligibility as any other student. Student groups with a ratio greater than one suggest they have a greater risk of being identified as eligible for special education than other students.



FIGURE 1
Risk of Special Education Eligibility Over Time
for Different Student Groups



Most groups remained flat from 2018 to 2021 with four of the six groups declining slightly. The risk ratio of Hispanic students increased slightly over this period and the ratio for Asian students increased the greatest from 0.53 to 0.62. While the ratio for Asian students increased, the ratio is below one and means that Asian students are about half as likely to be eligible for special education compared to other students. While many factors contribute to reductions in disproportionality, ED&D is a part of a multi-organizational effort to address disproportionate outcomes so that all students have the greatest chances of succeeding in the environment that best meets their learning needs

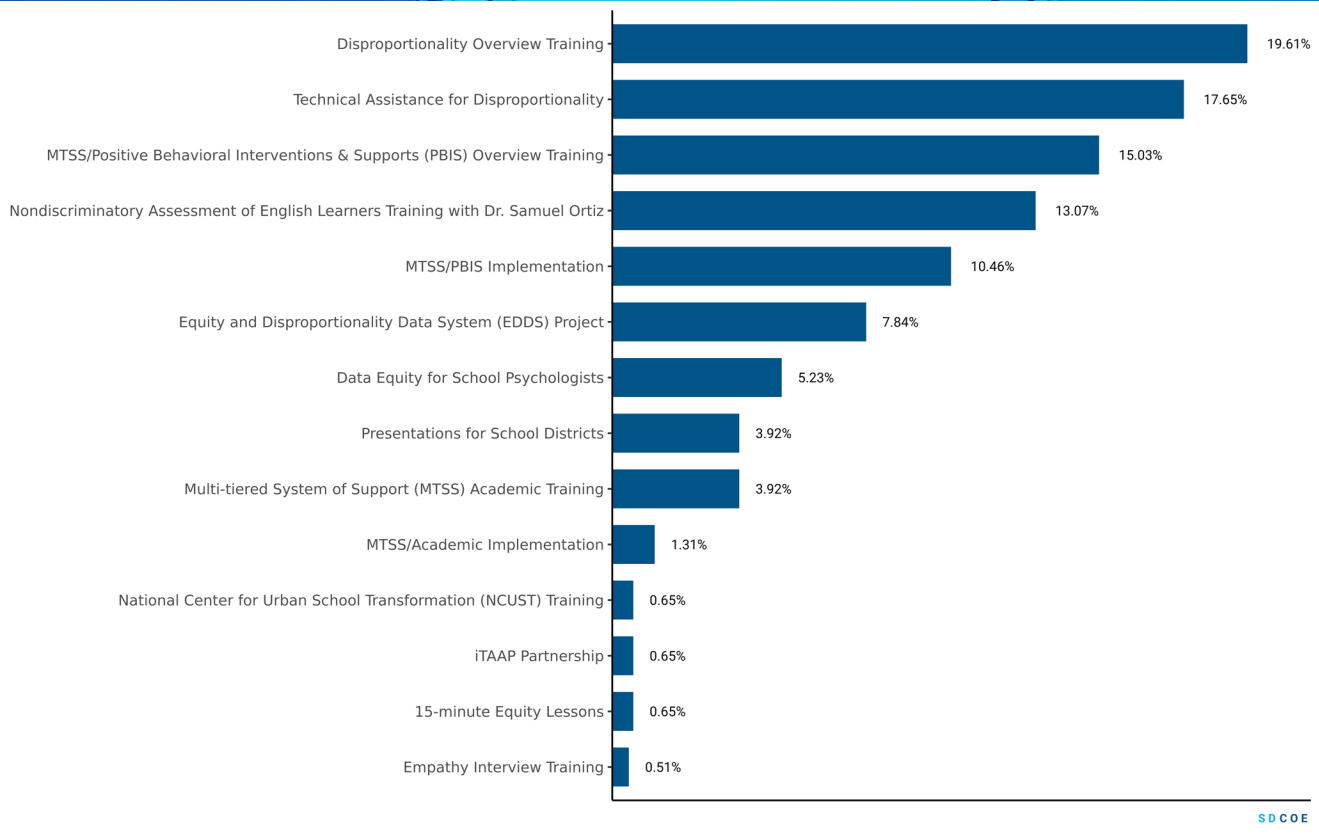
IMPACT SURVEY

In addition to significant changes in disproportionality statewide, **ED&D administered a survey to a purposive sample of 225 participants** attending one or more ED&D events over the past three years. The overall intent was to figure out how ED&D services benefitted the school district or SELPA leader and in what ways the school district changed because of working with ED&D.

Of the 225 participants selected, 158 agreed to participate in the survey. Most of these respondents participated in the following services: disproportionality overview sessions, technical assistance, and MTSS/PBIS training.



FIGURE 2
Percent of ED&D Participants Engaged in Core Services



ED&D participants took full advantage of the breadth of service offerings over the three-year period. When asked whether the participants “experienced improvement” at the completion of the service, over 54% of participants indicated they observed improvement in their respective district. Thirty percent of participants indicated it was “too soon to know” whether improvement occurred and only 6% indicated they “did not experience improvement.”

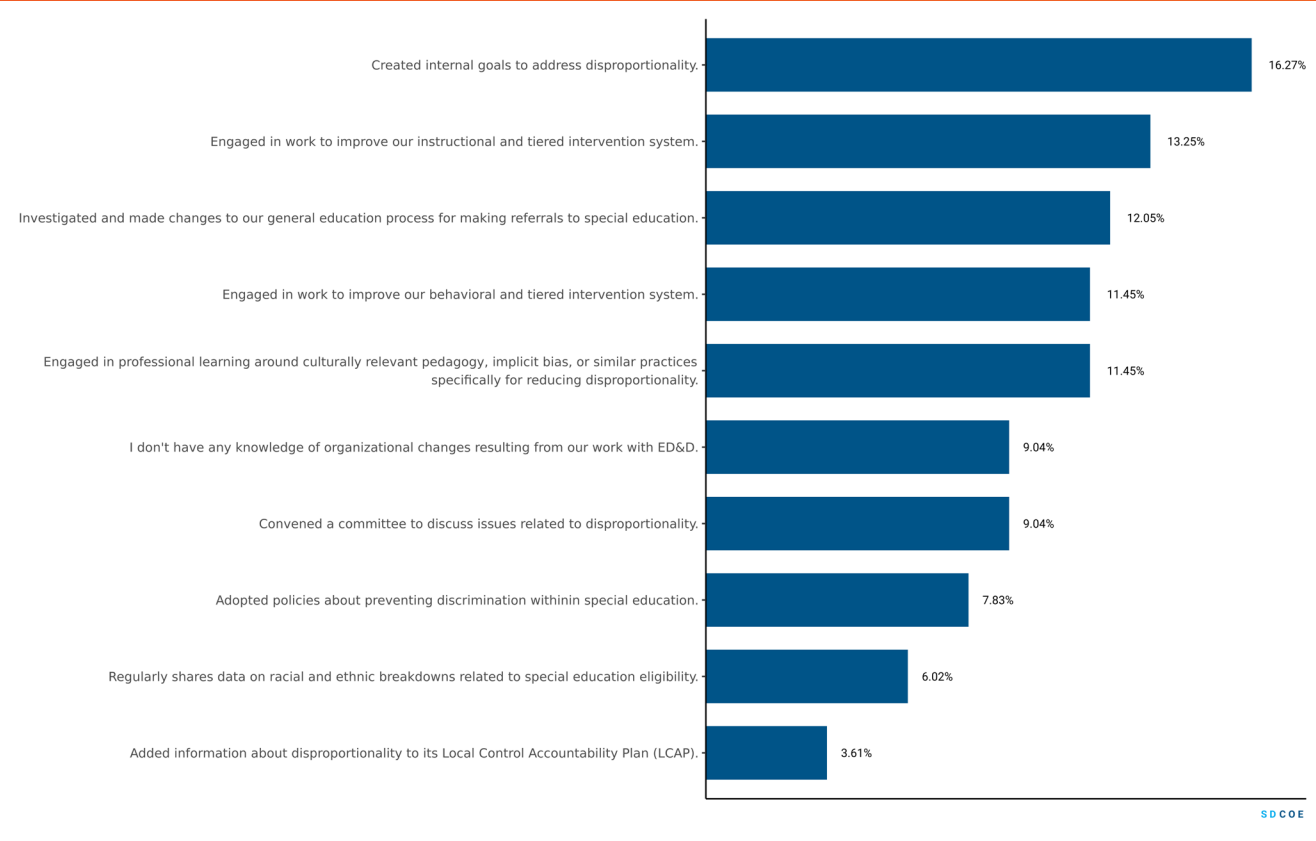
OVER 54% OF PARTICIPANTS INDICATED THEY OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT

Additionally, 68% of the participants who indicated improvement also reported the improvement was “ongoing and expected it to continue into the future.”

When asked about the kinds of changes that occurred because of working with ED&D, participants identified a host of systemic changes. For example, many participants indicated their respective districts created internal goals to address disproportionality. Other participants indicated their districts improved the tiered instructional system, while others identified changes to their general education processes. Each of these system level changes are critical to address the root problem of disproportionality versus the symptoms of it.

IMPACT SURVEY CONT.

FIGURE 3
Changes Participants Identified Making Within Their Respective School Districts



Finally, 81% of participants indicated they were satisfied with the support they received from ED&D with only 5% suggesting they could have received better service elsewhere. High levels of satisfaction with ED&D services, important system level changes, and changes in student level outcomes suggest that ED&D’s work has been extremely beneficial over the past five years and contributed to better educational environments and outcomes for all students.

81%
PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Over the past five years, ED&D has gained insights and learned many lessons through its partnerships with school districts, SELPA leadership, stakeholder and funder groups, community engagement, and evaluation activities. Below is a brief selection of these high-level insights.

1 INCORPORATING A DESIGN PROCESS INTO THE WORK INCREASES THE CHANCES OF MEETING STAKEHOLDER NEEDS.

Design is an often-overlooked element with service development, and this oversight is most common in situations where support providers fail to engage the end user in the service’s design. ED&D’s work with the Stanford d. school (aka Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford) to design its community-led, participatory service to address disproportionality created the foundation for this work to thrive. The d. school immersed ED&D with their clients to empathize with the way these clients experienced the service. This process proved valuable with how future clients perceived the quality and relevance of ED&D’s services and how these services contributed to mitigating the impact of disproportionality. Future service development would benefit from collaboration between program developers and design engineers.

2 ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC ISSUES STUDENTS FACE REQUIRES A MULTI-TIERED AND COORDINATED APPROACH.

There are many systemic reasons why disproportionality exists in school systems from ineffective general education processes to siloed communication between special education and general education. To address districts’ diverse needs, support providers must meet organizations where they are in this work. This process must start with understanding the organizational system and the potential root causes of the problem in that system and working to address these causes. There is no one-size-fits-all model when addressing disproportionality. Each district has its own unique set of issues contributing to the problem and these issues must be tackled systematically. Furthermore, school districts get support from many different providers through various state mechanisms like technical assistance, differentiated assistance, and others. Greater coordination is needed between these different partners in the state system of support to further reduce the significance of disproportionality statewide.

3 REDUCING DISPROPORTIONALITY REQUIRES TOOLS AND PROCESSES AND INCREASED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY THAT ALLOWS SYSTEMS TO ENGAGE IN REAL-TIME CYCLES OF ACTION AND IMPROVEMENT.

Currently, systems learn about disproportionality after the fact. That is, disproportionality is a lagging indicator that measures past event occurrence. Lagging indicators hamper systems from addressing the problem in real time, where it occurs in the process, which leads to frustration from educators and students. Systems need real-time data on the processes contributing to the problem. For example, systems need real-time information on who is responding and not responding to instruction and instructional interventions. Discipline data such as office referrals need real-time visualizations that illustrate who is being referred, for what offenses, and from which teachers. These real-time data sources along with coaching and capacity building support will allow systems to make unprecedented progress toward reducing disproportionality across the state.

TARGETED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In March 2022, the ED&D Project began providing technical assistance (TA) for local education agencies (LEAs) in Targeted Level 2 & 3 Disproportionality. The California Department of Education (CDE) identified 74 LEAs as Targeted Level 2 who were required to collaborate with ED&D throughout TA the process. Targeted Level 3 LEAs had the option to collaborate with ED&D.

This new project brought together the ED&D Team with the Focused Monitoring and Technical Assistant (FTMA) Units 2 & 3 from the Special Education Division of the CDE. **The goal of ED&D was to incorporate a human-centered focus and design thinking approach** in the development of the new Compliance and Improvement Monitoring (CIM) process. The redesign process would include the opportunity for LEAs to engage in individualized team coaching sessions where the ED&D and FMTA representatives could address questions, concerns and provide guidance for LEA teams to embark in the TA journey in an organized manner.

Targeted level 2 LEAs were invited to attend an onboarding session where the TA process and requirements were outlined. Then, LEAs attended a series of workshops focused on TA components for the CIM process. This process is broken down into three steps: Gather and Inquire, Investigate, and Plan. The first step, Gather and Inquire took place between March and June of 2022 and was broken down into five trainings: Data Drill Down, Parent Input, Policies, Practices & Procedures Review, Educational Benefit, and Infrastructure Analysis.

Through the Step 1: Gather and Inquire training workshops, LEAs learned how to conduct data drill downs, and how to use empathy interviews to gather parent input related to the identified area of disproportionality. In collaboration with CDE, LEAs who attended were taught how to use the Special Education Compliance Monitoring System (SECMS) to complete the required Policies, Practice & Procedures Self-Review process. Additionally, LEAs were provided with optional training to complete the Educational Benefit and Infrastructure Assessment process, where LEAs could examine the educational benefit of students attending school within the LEA and examine policies and procedures that may hinder the LEAs effectiveness for providing special education services that meet the needs of all students.

The second step, Investigate, occurred July-September 2022; however, ED&D collaborated with FMTAs to design and provide the root cause analysis (RCA) training for LEAs interested to attend an early training session in May. The third step, Plan, occurred October-November 2022. Throughout the TA process, ED&D collaborated with FMTAs to support LEAs with the development of their CIM plans.



IMPACT BY LOCATION



AMADOR COUNTY serves 1 LEA in the Jackson area and 3,914 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

ANAHEIM CITY serves 6 LEAs in the Cypress area and 16,161 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

BUTTE COUNTY serves 13 LEAs in the Oroville area and 30,880 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

CALAVERAS COUNTY serves 5 LEAs in the Angels Camp area and 5,050 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

CLOVIS UNIFIED serves 1 LEA in the Clovis area and 42,790 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

CONTRA COSTA serves 16 LEAs in the Concord area and 80,453 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

DESERT MOUNTAIN serves 20 LEAs in the Apple Valley area and 117,435 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

EL DORADO CHARTER serves 99 LEAs across California and 10,346 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

EL DORADO COUNTY serves 14 LEAs in the Placerville area and 27,997 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

FOOTHILL serves 3 LEAs in the Glendale area and 43,616 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

FRESNO COUNTY serves 30 LEAs in the Fresno area and 3,198 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

FRESNO UNIFIED serves 1 LEA in the Fresno area and 72,419 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

GARDEN GROVE UNIFIED serves 1 LEA in the Garden Grove area and 40,124 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

IMPERIAL COUNTY serves 16 LEAs in the El Centro area and 36,607 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

KINGS COUNTY serves 13 LEAs in the Hanford area and 35,094 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

LAKE COUNTY serves 7 LEAs in the Lakeport area and 9,540 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

LONG BEACH UNIFIED serves 1 LEA in the Long Beach area and 69,708 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHARTER serves 27 LEAs in the Los Angeles area and 1,334 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED serves 1 LEA in the Los Angeles area and 57,4996 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

MADERA-MARIPOSA serves 17 LEAs in the Madera area and 33,291 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

MID CITIES serves 4 LEAs in the Castro Valley area and 37,275 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

NORTH COASTAL serves 15 LEAs in the San Marcos area and 114,434 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

NORTH REGION serves 5 LEAs in the Albany area and 26,999 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

NORWALK-LA MIRADA serves 1 LEA in the Norwalk area and 16,209 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

OAKLAND UNIFIED serves 1 LEA in the Oakland area and 48,709 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

SAN DIEGO CITY UNIFIED serves 1 LEA in the San Diego area and 118,523 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY serves 10 LEAs in the Stockton area and 77,026 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

SAN JUAN UNIFIED serves 1 LEA in the Carmichael area and 50,762 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

SAN RAMON VALLEY UNIFIED serves 1 LEA in the Danville area and 30,726 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY serves 25 LEAs in the Santa Barbara area and 67,129 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

SANTA CLARA I-IV, VII serves 26 LEAs in the San Jose area and 149,426 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

SANTA CLARITA serves 6 LEAs in the Santa Clarita area and 45,543 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

SHASTA COUNTY serves 29 LEAs in the Redding area and 26,315 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

SIERRA SANDS serves 1 LEA in the Ridgecrest area and 4,950 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

SOUTH BAY SERVICE serves 7 LEAs in the National City area and 93,655 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

SOUTHEAST CONSORTIUM serves 12 LEAs in the San Jose area and 116,375 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

TEHAMA COUNTY serves 13 LEAs in the Red Bluff area and 10,825 students. They partner with ED&D for MTSS workshops.

TRI-VALLEY serves 6 LEAs in the Pleasanton area and 44,646 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

TUOLUMNE COUNTY serves 12 LEAs in the Sonora area and 5,685 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

WEST ORANGE COUNTY serves 5 LEAs in the Huntington Beach area and 45,519 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

WHITTIER CO-OP serves 7 LEAs in the Whittier area and 41,206 students. They partner with ED&D for EDDS workshops.

CLOSING

Equity, Disproportionality & Design’s (ED&D) commitment to LEAs to prevent disproportionality and build equitable systems in our schools will continue despite the recent denial of our proposal to continue as a special education resource lead within California’s statewide system of support. **We are committed to helping SELPAs, LEAs, schools, and educators bring equity to their systems and equitable education experiences for all students.** ED&D provides technical assistance to LEAs, SELPAs as well as county offices in their equity goals and in addressing their differentiated assistance (DA) and or compliance and improvement monitoring (CIM) status via customizable professional development training, coaching opportunities, and technical assistance. Using iTAAP, a real time analytic data tool, LEAs will also be able to monitor their Dashboard indicators, CIM indicators, and prepare/predict future performance, ensure compliance, and prevent disproportionality. LEAs, SELPAs, county offices, and schools can contract with ED&D to continue their work in closing the achievement and opportunity gap while building equitable systems.



CONTACT OUR TEAM

During the past five years, the Equity, Disproportionality & Design (ED&D) project team in partnership with CDE and CCEE has built the capacity of SELPAs to support LEAs in developing and implementing evidence-based practices for students with disabilities (SWD). If you’re interested in learning more about ED&D’s work or contracting with us to provide services, please reach out to the San Diego South County Special Education Local Plan Area team.



Russell Coronado
Executive Director
rcoronado@sdcoe.net



Erin Mahoney
Executive Consultant
erin.mahoney@sdcoe.net



Marcus Jackson
Executive Consultant
marcus.jackson@sdcoe.net



Jennifer Gorospe Tull
Coordinator
jennifer.gorospetull@sdcoe.net



Olivia Rivera
Consultant
olivia.rivera@sdcoe.net

